



**Library Board of Trustees**  
**Library Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Via Zoom**  
**Monday, December 13, 2021, 4:00pm – 5:30pm**

**Trustees Present**

Ailen Arreaza  
Jon Buchan  
Joe Helweg, Chair  
Gloria Kelley  
Tracy Montross  
Brandon Neal  
Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson  
Charles Thomas

**Absent**

Rob Harrington  
Dr. Kimmerly Martin  
Dr. Ricky Woods

**Staff Present**

Karen Beach  
Elyse Berrier  
Kevin Bittle  
Shelley Book  
Barbara Cantisano  
David Dillard  
Asha Ellis  
Seth Ervin  
Jenni Gaisbauer  
Lea Glaze  
Saul Hernandez  
Jesse Isley  
Meryle Leonard  
Pamela McCarter  
Caitlin Moen  
Angie Myers  
Emily Nanney  
Chantez Neymoss  
John O'Connor  
Keisha Portis  
Amy Richard  
Kathy Scott  
Holly Summers-Gil  
Hillary Swierc  
Kim Sykes-Joseph  
Tony Tallent  
Marcellus Turner  
Martha Yesowitch

**Others Present**

Mark Kutny

Joe Helweg welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation in this previously unscheduled Board meeting. A quick recap of the of the programming snapshots from November was given highlighting 3,267 participants in the libraries' Enhanced Storytimes and 288 participants in the Active Reading Storytimes.

## **Absence with Cause**

Mr. Helweg requested a motion to approve absence with cause for Rob Harrington, Dr. Kimmerly Martin and Dr. Ricky Woods. On a motion by Charles Thomas and seconded by Ailen Arreaza, the Trustees unanimously approved their absence with cause.

## **Minutes**

Mr. Helweg requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on November 15, 2021. On a motion by Charles Thomas and seconded by Jon Buchan, the Trustees unanimously approved the November 15, 2021 meeting minutes.

## **Chair Report**

Mr. Helweg provided the following updates:

- End of Year Recap
  - Hired MT as the new CEO
  - Racial Equity Task Force work
  - Fine Free
  - Digital Literacy work
  - Mobile Library
  - Added Jon Buchan and Tracy Montross to the Board while saying goodbye to Jennifer Appleby and Ed Williams
  - Real Estate projects moving forward
  - Highest level of assurance from the annual financial audit
  - Incredible work on new Main Library
  - CommonSpark Campaign successes
  - Verse & Vino and One for the Books
  - All this success and work done with the backdrop of COVID-19
- Board Meetings for 2022
  - Continue to meet in Zoom format for the foreseeable future
  - Meetings will move back to the 12:00-1:30 timeslot
  - Meetings will continue to be monthly until July

## **Committee Reports**

### **Real Estate Committee**

Brandon Neal turned the update over to David Dillard.

- Sugar Creek FAQ
  - Reminder that the Library has a small portion of our Sugar Creek parcel that is beside our remote parking which we do not use. The Sugar Creek Charter School requested to lease that parcel to use as a playground for their students.
  - The Real Estate Committee brought it to the full board a few months ago and the board gave tentative approval to execute the lease with a few conditions. Those conditions were that the lease include a termination agreement, an indemnification clause and a restoration clause. The other condition was that we create an FAQ document in the event anyone from the public were to question why we are allowing a school to utilize our land.

- The FAQ document was included in your Board packet that was distributed last week. As you review the documents, please let me know if you have questions.

After some discussion regarding the original reasoning for the lease agreement and liability issues the board approved.

### **CEO Report**

Marcellus Turner provided the following updates:

- Libraries will be closed starting Friday, December 24 through Tuesday, December 28 and again on Friday, December 31 and Saturday, January 1.
- Thank you to the Board for the warm welcome and for their support over the last 9 months bringing me up to speed on the work of library.
- Had the opportunity to orient Jon and Tracy to the Board last Friday and look forward to working with them.

### **Library Director Report**

Caitlin Moen provided the following updates:

- **Mobile App Launching**
  - We launched the new Library app on December 1 to great success
  - The new app experience is very much in-line with our website and what we want our customer experience to be
  - A special thank you goes to Keisha Portis for making this new app a reality
- **Mobile Library Update**
  - The mobile library has arrived in Charlotte are we are working to get it launched
  - You can visit the mobile library on December 21 outside the Government Center from 3:30pm-6:00pm
  - We are also inviting County leadership and the BOCC to visit it that day before their meeting
  - There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, January 29 at 10:00 am at the Eastway Recreation Center off Eastway Drive.
  - The mobile library will begin service on January 18 operating on a 3-week rotation targeting areas in the community with limited access to physical library buildings or virtual services.
  - The schedule is being finalized now and will be added to the library website where you can also request that the mobile library visit your community or event.

### **3 Year Strategic Plan Presentation/Review**

Seth Ervin reminded everyone that every 3 years the library is required to submit a 3-year strategic business plan to Mecklenburg County. This plan not only helps us set the strategy for the organization, but is also tied to our budget requests for the next 3 years. We will hear in January from the BOCC about their priorities for their strategic plans but we wanted to get ahead of the game and share with you the 5 themes that will set the course for the Library over the next 3 years.

- Access to Libraries & Library Services
- Community Engagement & Partnerships
- Sustainability & Operational Excellence
- Equity
- Technology

The recommendation to use “resiliency” as opposed to “sustainability” was made by Tracy Montross so that it won’t be confused or associated with environmental sustainability.

Brandon Neal and Tracy Montross both recommended having environmental sustainability goals as a part of our story that we can speak to our funders and our community about.

Possible budget requests we have identified:

- Access
  - Pineville staffing
  - Library collections
  - Customer fee reductions
  - South Boulevard staffing increase
- Community Engagement & Partnerships
  - None identified at this time
- Sustainability & Operational Excellence
  - Contractual increases
  - Critical support area positions
  - Security needs assessment
  - Employee morale investments
- Equity
  - Equity leader position
- Technology
  - Additional mobile devices
  - Digital equity investments

In order to prioritize these, we’re going to have to wait and see what guidance we get from the County first. We will most likely have more information at our February board meeting. The BOCC’s budget retreat in late January is where they refine their priorities and from there the County Manager needs time to put together her guidance that she will share with us the first week of February. We will then meet with the County in mid-late February to discuss our priorities then have the more formal submissions in March when MT presents to the County Executive Team. February with our Board will be the key month for engagement again on the budget.

Joe Helweg recommends having more discussion at our January board meeting around cost estimates and what stands out as most important for the direction and mission of the Library.

Angie Myers agreed and will have something for the Board to react to at the January meeting.

After some discussion around what the Trustees can do now or in the near future as far as library advocacy, it was recommended by Angie Myers that the Board of Trustees work on relationship building and the impact of libraries and keeping libraries front-of-mind in budget.

MT stated that we do have time on our side at this point and the library will use this time to refine our speaking points and our process for advocacy.

## **BOCC Presentation Review**

MT stated that as a part of our annual presentation to the BOCC, we have an opportunity on December 21 to present the great work of the library, setting the stage for what we've just been talking about. The design of the presentation is intentional to start messaging the goals/themes of our 3-year strategic business plan. Charles Thomas is delivering the presentation to the BOCC so we have asked him to also present it to you today to get your feedback and reaction before going in front of the BOCC.

Charles Thomas presented to the following:

- Slide 1- Thank You
  - Thank you to the BOCC on behalf of the Library staff and Board of Trustees
  - Thank you to Dena Diorio and Leslie Johnson for their support
  - Thank you to the Commission for their support of "Fine Free" and the new mobile library last year and for use of Hal Marshall
  - Thank you to the Commissioners for appointing Jon Buchan and Tracy Montross
- Slide 2- Strategic Business Plan
  - Highlight what our plan goals are for the strategic business plan
- Slide 3- Library Services
  - Explain how our library services improve lives and build a stronger community through programming in areas of education, lifelong learning, workforce development and economic mobility, digital literacy and diversity/equity and inclusion.
- Slide 4- Services During the Pandemic
  - Overview of our services during the pandemic
- Slide 5- Mobile Library
  - Mobile Library and its plan for serving our high needs areas of the community
  - Ribbon cutting ceremony for the mobile library
- Slide 6- New Projects and Tentative Timeline
  - Facilities Master Plan completion
  - LAC, 2022
  - New library in Pineville- 2022
  - Relocation of University City Regional Library- 2023
  - New Main Library – 2025
- Slide 7- Supporting Social Needs in Our Community
  - Early voting at branches
  - Free COVID-19 test pickup
  - Project Outpour
- Slide 8- Building Community through partnerships
  - Partner with more than 100 organizations in our community
  - Highlighted partners are:
    - Mecklenburg County
    - CMS
    - Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance
    - Read Charlotte
    - Charlotte Journalism Collaborative

- Slide 9- Racial Equity Task Force
  - Came together to make recommendations to the Library in 4 areas:
    - Institutional
    - Workforce
    - Programming
    - Culture
- Slide 10- Digital Equity
  - Successful in distributing 2,700 free MeckTech devices
  - Received a federal grant to work in the West Boulevard corridor to help provide digital access to single family homes in that area
  - Expanding the MeckTech program which will allow us to distribute 20,000 refurbished laptops in our community
- Slide 11- Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation
  - The CommonSpark Campaign
  - Verse & Vino had 1,300 attend and raised over \$400,000
  - *One for the Books* attracted more than 2,000 people to the Main Library's formal closing celebration
- Slide 12- New Main Library
  - In 2025 the new Main Library will open on the same site where the 4 previous libraries have been built
  - To date we have raised \$104 MM of the \$143 MM goal for new Main Library, the Library Administrative Center, technology programming and for our endowment.

#### **Personnel Issue**

Seth Ervin announced that he is leaving the library and going to work for Duke Energy. He thanked the Board for their support over the years.

Joe Helweg thanked Seth for his dedication to the library and to his work over the last 9 years.

**At 5:10pm on a motion by Brandon Neal and seconded by Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson, the board adjourned the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marcellus Turner  
CEO